

Message Text

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ACTION EA-09

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TOKYO 18881

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: OVIP, EGEN, JA (MASUDA, MINORU)
SUBJECT: VISIT OF MITI VICE MINISTER MASUDA

REF: STATE 311413

1. SUMMARY: MITI VICE MINISTER MASUDA PLANS VISIT TO US JAN 11-13 AND IS REQUESTING BROAD SET OF APPOINTMENTS. DESPITE UNCERTAINTY OF HIS FUTURE ROLE, EMBASSY URGES DEPT. TO FACILITATE GOOD APPOINTMENTS THAT WILL HELP HIM ANALYZE FUTURE US-JAPAN ECONOMIC RELATIONSHIP. END SUMMARY.

2. AT MEETING SCHEDULED BEFORE RECEIPT REFTEL, MITI VICE MINISTER FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE MASUDA TOLD EC MIN BE EXPECTED VISIT WASHINGTON AND NEW YORK ABOUT JAN. 11-13 PRIOR TO VISIT TO EUROPE. HE HAS NO SPECIFIC CONSULTATIONS TO ENGAGE IN AND EXPECTS HOLD GENERAL DISCUSSIONS ON ENERGY AND TRADE POLICY QUESTIONS.

3. MASUDA HOPES TO MEET WITH OUTGOING AND INCOMING ADMINISTRATION OFFICIALS AND CONGRESSIONAL LEADERS. SPECIFIC NAMES MENTIONED WERE FEA'S ZARB, DEPARTMENT'S HABIB, SENATOR RUSSELL LONG AND FRB CHAIRMAN BURNS (EC MIN SUGGESTED TALK WITH KATZ OF EB). REQUESTS FOR APPOINTMENTS ARE BEING HANDLED BY JAPANESE EMBASSY, WASHINGTON. HE RECOGNIZES THAT MANY NEW ADMINISTRATION FIGURES
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WILL NOT BE IN PLACE.

4. MASUDA HAS NOT YET CREATED AN EFFECTIVE ROLE FOR HIMSELF IN VICE MINISTER'S POSITION WHICH WAS CREATED FOR HIM IN SUMMER 1976. POSITION SEEMED TO MAKE SENSE AS MITI'S COUNTERPART TO YOSHINO POSITION IN FOREIGN

MINISTRY AND AS REFLECTION INCREASED INTERNATIONALIZATION OF MITI ATTITUDES. HOWEVER, FOREIGN MINISTRY CONTINUES TO HEAD DELEGATIONS ABROAD OR WHEN VISITORS COME TO JAPAN. IN ADDITION, SUBSTANTIVE MITI DIVISIONS CONTINUE TO BE HEADED BY STRONG AND CAPABLE OFFICIALS. RESULT IS THAT MASUDA HAS BEEN LARGELY UNOCCUPIED AND CONTINUES TO BE DESCRIBED BY HIS SUBORDINATES AS "STUDYING."

5. WE THEREFORE CONCLUDE THAT THERE IS LITTLE DANGER OF HIS OUTFLANKING VETERAN, WELL-KNOWN YOSHINO, ESPECIALLY SINCE TIMING OF HIS US VISIT IS SO UNSUITABLE. NEVERTHELESS, WE HOPE DEPT WILL FACILITATE APPROPRIATE APPOINTMENTS FOR MASUDA. HE IS A USEFUL ALLY ON BROAD RANGE OF INTERESTS IMPORTANT TO US. HE BRINGS CONSIDERABLE EXPERIENCE WITH ENERGY ISSUES PLUS HIS NEW INTEREST IN TRADE POLICY ISSUES.
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